

ICES support for development of catch sampling programmes

Vandemaele Sofie and Torreele Els

Vlaamse overheid, Instituut voor landbouw-, visserij en voedingsonderzoek (LV-ILVO),
Burgemeester Van Gansberghelaan 92, 9820 Merelbeke, Belgium
E-mail: sofie.vandemaele@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

According to European legislation, each Member State involved in European fisheries has to collect data on its fisheries and aquaculture. Collected data serve all sorts of purposes for a broad range of stakeholders, with one of the main goals to set the TACs (Total Allowable Catches) and quota each year. The Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (ILVO) is the coordinator of the Data Collection Framework for Belgium. The Belgian commercial fishing fleet is sampled by seagoing observers, who register and analyse the catch. For several commercial species, information on weight, length, age, sex and maturity is collected on a trip-by-trip basis. In order to ensure the quality of the collected data, ILVO is a member of the ICES (international council for the exploration of the sea) expert group WGCATCH (Working Group on Commercial Catches) for many years now. WGCATCH supports the development and quality assurance of regional and national catch sampling schemes and estimation procedures that can provide reliable quality input data to stock assessment and advice, while making the most efficient use of sampling resources.

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